



## **MEMORANDUM**

9 JULY 2004

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TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

FROM: DAVID MERRITT

RE: GUNNISON/GRAND VALLEY SELENIUM ISSUES

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As you are all aware, selenium is continuing to loom very large in the water quality arena in the Gunnison and Grand Valley areas. The mainstems of the Gunnison and the Colorado Rivers, as well as most of the tributaries in the Grand Junction/Delta/Montrose area are on the Water Quality-Impaired (303d) List prepared by the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission. The mainstem of the Colorado River leaving the State of Colorado is actually out of compliance with the chronic standard of 4.6 ppb for Selenium.

Through a great deal of involvement by both Arkansas valley and West Slope entities, Senator Allard secured a write-in the Water Resources Development Act authorizing \$5 million to support studies on selenium standards, mitigation measures and selecting potential pilot demonstration projects for future authorizations. The program would be managed by the Corps of Engineers, and there is some concern, particularly within the Uncompahgre Valley, that it would be directed more at assessments than at on the ground improvements.

David Kanzer has been very heavily involved with both the Grand Valley and the Gunnison/Uncompahgre Valley efforts for the past few years, and has been able to assist in connecting the efforts of the two organizations. This is, however, an activity which will require at least tens of millions of dollars, and a decade or more to adequately resolve. We have the active involvement of three counties, three municipalities, numerous federal agencies, and many water user entities.

Previously, the Board had authorized the use of up to \$10,000 to assist with the hiring of a

Selenium Coordinator, if a single individual were hired for both the Grand Valley and the Gunnison/Uncompaghere Valley. This did not occur, but the opportunity has again arisen, and Sonja Chavez de Baca, the Coordinator for the Gunnison/Uncompaghere Valley has applied for the position. We will continue to work with the two groups in an effort to create a more comprehensive program.

Also, as a result of the state-wide coalition being put together on Selenium, a Selenium Forum is planned, possibly for late October 2004. We will be involved with this effort, and will be asked to provide some funding assistance. There is money in the budget to cover this activity.